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## OREGONIAN FOLK-LORE.

## THE WOODRAT AND THE FIVE RABBITS.

THE story goes that a woodrat lived with its mother, and that five cotton-tail rabbits lived in close vicinity. The rat said to them: "Let us have a quarrel!" One of the rabbits inquired: "Why do you want us to quarrel with you?" to which the woodrat replied: "That's all right; let us have a fuss! don't you always prefer the bitter leaves of some sort of cabbage to everything else?" The rabbit answered: "You must certainly be a professional thief; just yesterday I saw you watching all around for the right moment to steal something, your big ears bent sidewise!" The woodrat: "And you I always see skipping about with your crooked legs to snatch the leaves from the cabbage-bush!" To this the rabbit replied: "You are an ignoramus and an old fool! you are good for nothing except to eat holes into your grandmother's long dress. That is why you want to attack me."

Hereupon the rat went away to a distance, and spread out a net to catch its victim. Then it seized a stick, and approaching the rabbit's den forced him to leave it, drove him into the net, and beat him to death.

In the same manner the woodrat started a quarrel with another of the cotton-tail rabbits. "Let us have a fight!" "Why should we fight?" And they engaged in a fight because the rabbit reproached the rat for eating up its grandmother's dress. "You are nothing but a fool and a good-for-nothing eater of cabbage-bushes!" replied the rat. The rabbit said: "We all know you are a mean thief and pilferer who lives in an old wooden shed." "You nincompoop!" replies the other, "you poor offspring of well-to-do parents, mind well what you are going to do to me! Get out from there!" and the rat drove him away, ran after him and killed him, brought his body home and ate him up. Thus the remainder of the rabbits disappeared, all being exterminated by the formidable woodrat in the same manner; it and its mother ate them up and danced over them a medicine dance. But during the dance the rat's wooden lodge caught fire, and both inmates perished in the conflagration. That is the end of the tale.

## THE STORY OF THE BEAVER.

A beaver rowed a dug-out canoe, and had two young going with him. A woodrat came up to him, asking what was the news. "I cannot tell you any news, but you can; tell me quick what you know!" the beaver replied. Then the woodrat said: "The rat was married to his mother, they say; that's the kind of news I know!"

Then the rat went away to watch the canoe upon an ambush ; it then attacked and shot at the canoe, and when it was upset it saved the two young beavers, while the old one plunged to the bottom of the lake. Then the woodrat went straight home and hid itself in its mother's lodge, to avoid the beaver's wrath. But when the beaver arrived, he discovered the rat and inquired of him : " Whither did you flee ? " " Why do you want to know ? I went to get a necklace of beads to present to you," replied the rat. The beaver took the beads and indignantly threw them into the fire. Upon this the woodrat attacked him, and told its mother to make an open space in the midst of the camp-fire to throw the beaver into. " I am going to throw the beaver into the fire ; when he is there, cover him up with earth ! " But things went off differently, for the beaver seized both the rat and his mother, and threw them into the fire. " Utututu ! " cried the rat in the fire ; " so it is me whom you are going to cover up ! " and it whirled about in the fire, while its hair and flesh was singed. The beaver then apostrophized it for its meanness : " I did not come to see you here for a mere child's play ; you get a painful punishment now, and the Indians would certainly scoff at you if they could see where you are now. After your body is charred up, the people would not like to have a smell of you,<sup>1</sup> and would call you simply the 'stinking one,' you miserable fellow, you who own nothing but a house of sticks, and are of no account ! " Hereupon the beaver set fire to the wooden lodge of the rat and its mother, took his two young under his arms, and went home. So far goes the story.

#### HUNTING EXPLOITS OF THE GOD K'MUKAMTCH.

After creating the world, K'mukamtch took a stroll on the surface of the earth, and perceived five lynxes sitting on trees. Being dressed in an old rabbit-fur robe pierced with holes, he tore it to pieces and threw it away, exclaiming : " If I kill the five lynxes around me, I shall have a better fur-cover than that one." He picked up stones, but when he threw one, he missed his aim and one of the lynxes climbed down the tree and ran away. Sorrowfully he said : " I won't get a good mantle this time ! " Then he threw a stone at another lynx, and, missing it, the animal likewise jumped down and disappeared. " Now my fur-robe will become rather small ! " The three remaining lynxes sat on their trees and scoffed at the unsuccessful deity. This tickled him. He threw another stone and missed again ; another and another, all with the same result, and when the

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the fact that some Indian tribes of the Pacific coast, as the Shasti, *e. g.*, are roasting woodrats to eat them. These animals gather a quantity of sticks around their dens ; hence the term, "house of sticks," or wooden lodge.

last one of the beasts had scampered off, K'mukamtch ejaculated, "Now the skin will not even cover my back;" and while singing,

"Ló-i lóyan lóyak, ló-i lóyan lóyak,"

he went to pick up the pieces of his old fur-cover, which he had torn up, pinned them together with wood-splinters, put it around his body, and continued his way.

Having gone to a short distance, he found an antelope suffering from the toothache, and stretched out on a clearing in the woods. He spread his pieced-up mantle over the animal, and began to kick at it to make it bloodshot. He looked around for a stone-knife to skin it with, but after having released it of his hold the antelope ran away behind his back; he turned around, saw it running, and said: "My antelope looks exactly like this one!" The animal then ran past him, and when he saw his own mantle lying on the back of the antelope he cried: "Stop! stop! The Indians will laugh at you when they see that you are wrapped in that miserable old rabbit-skin of mine."

#### AMHULUK, THE MONSTER OF THE MOUNTAIN POOL.

Amhuluk at first desired to establish his residence in the fertile plains of Atfálati, but seeing that they were not large enough for him, he set out for a more extended region. Such a one he found at the Forked Mountain; he stopped there and has ever since occupied that spot. Every living being seen by him is drowned there, all the trees within his reach have their crowns upside down in his embrace, and many other things are gathered up in his stagnant waters. The monster's legs seem deprived of their hair, and several kinds of dogs he keeps near him. His horns are spotted and of enormous magnitude.

Three children were busy digging for the ádsadsh-root, when Amhuluk emerged from the ground not far from them. When the children became aware of him, they exclaimed: "Let us take his beautifully spotted horns, to make digging-tools of them!" But the monster approached fast and lifted two of the children on his horns, while the eldest managed to escape. Wherever Amhuluk set his feet the ground was sinking. When the boy returned home he said to his father: "Something dreadful has come near us, and has taken away my brother and my sister!" He then went to sleep, and when he lay on his couch his parents noticed that his body was full of blots.

Immediately the father put his girdle around his dress and started for the Forked Mountain, where his children had met their death. He found the tracks of the son who had been fortunate enough to escape the same fate, followed them, skirted the mountain, and there he saw the bodies of his children emerging from the muddy pool.

Then they disappeared for a while, to emerge again on the opposite slope of the mountain. This apparition occurred five times in succession, and finally the father reached the very spot where the children had been drowned. A pool of water was visible, which sent up a fog, and in the midst of the fog the children were seen lifted up high upon the horns of Amhuluk. With his hands he made signals to them, and the children replied : " Didei, didei, didei " (we changed our bodies).

The father, painfully moved, set up a mourning wail and remained upon the shore all night. The next day the fog rose up again, and the father again perceived his children borne upon the horns of the monster. He made the same signals, and the children replied : " Didei, didei, didei." Full of grief, he established a camping lodge upon the shore, stayed in it five days, and every day the children reappeared in the same manner as before. When they appeared no longer, the father returned to his family and said : " Amhuluk has ravished the children. I have seen them ; they are at the Forked Mountain. I have seen them upon the horns of the monster ; many trees were in the water, the crown down below, the trunk looking upward."

Of this series of four tales the three first ones all come from the Modoc people, the congeners of the Klamath Lake people of southwestern Oregon ; whereas the fourth one was obtained among the Kalapuya Indians, now on the Grande Ronde Reservation, northwest of Salem, the Oregonian capital. A few elucidations only are needed for a full comprehension of these stories. They are accurate and almost verbal translations from the texts of the respective Indian languages.

The first and second tales excel through the graphic manner in which the character and habits of the quadrupeds involved are described.

In the third tale, K'mukamtch, the chief deity of the Klamath and Modoc mythology, represents the summer and the winter sun, and in some of the myths also stands for the clouded sky. His name may be interpreted by "the old man of our ancestors." His demoniac power is unequalled in ruse and force ; he is dreaded by everyone, not loved or revered ; and in the dealings with his son Aishish he is cruel and remorseless. His popularity among men is inferior to that of Aishish, and hence he often becomes the target of mockery of the genii and personified animals introduced into his society. What the originators of the tale thought of him is also the general idea which the Modoc people entertain of this tricky deity. *Five* is the mystic or sacred number in all the Oregonian folk-lore products.

The fourth story was obtained by me in 1877 among the Tuálati, Atfálati or Wápatu Indians of the Kalapuya family, whose feeble remnants now reside upon the Grande Ronde Reservation, and whose former home was upon Gaston Lake, south of Hillsborough. There are scarcely over twenty of these aborigines living now. Their myths are peculiarly attractive, and although the Kalapuyas were never a warlike people, they maintained their ground in the Willamet valley, western Oregon, for many centuries. As to its morphology, their language is extremely primitive; every noun and every adjective may be changed into a verb, and the verb has such an enormous multitude of forms that its inflection is difficult to grasp. Of higher deities they had none, and an abstraction only, Ayuthlme-i, existed in their stead, a term which corresponds exactly to the wákan of the Sioux, and to our ideas of "miraculous, divine, strange, incomprehensible." The sun was not an object of their worship, as it seems, but occurs in their myths as the *flint-boy*, a personification symbolizing the active, productive power of the rays of the summer sun.

The mountain pool with its weird surroundings is depicted with great ingenuity in the tale. It and the "Forked Mountain" lie fifteen miles west of Forest Grove, northwestern Oregon.

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